Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
Roaming Shores Water/Sewer Rate Increase

Why are base rates rising for water and sewer?

The Village of Roaming Shores has a shortfall between the cost of providing water/sewer services and village billing revenues. To balance the difference between costs and income, a $12.50 monthly increase will be applied to the water/sewer base rates as of January 1, 2022. Water/sewer usage is billed bi-monthly so each Roaming Shores household will receive a $25 increase in their March 2022 bill which covers January and February usage.

Available for Use (AFU) rates on empty lots will increase $2.61/monthly and will continue to be billed bi-annually.

Water/sewer rates for premises outside the corporate limits of Roaming Shores will have a $15.62 monthly base rate increase.

When will the rate increase take effect?

The first 2022 billing cycle begins on January 1, 2022. The bi-monthly bill covering January and February usage will be mailed in mid-March and will contain the additional base rate charge. The new base rate charges are in effect January 1 – December 31, 2022.

When was the last rate increase implemented?

Roaming Shores water/sewer rates have remained the same since 2012. Yet, Roaming Shores Village cost of providing these services has risen 9% over the past nine years. The rate increase will prevent a budget shortfall for water/sewer in 2022.

Are there specific aspects of the water/sewer expenses that are going up higher than others?

Yes. Sewer expenses have increased higher than water expenses. Repair of water main breaks and lift station pumps have contributed to rising costs. Residents can directly lower village sewer costs by not flushing <u>any</u> wipes, diapers or feminine products into toilets or drains. Doing so causes the lift stations to plug and motors to overheat. Lift station repairs in 2021 to date are over $13,000. Products labeled "flushable" wipes should be disposed into a garbage can and not via a toilet or drain. Only water and toilet paper can be effectively flushed into Roaming Shores toilets and managed by our current sewer infrastructure.

How are water/sewer rates calculated?

Both water and sewer bills have flat base rate and usage rate components. The water base rate for residents of Roaming Shores is currently $30 and will increase $7.50 in January 2022 for a total new base rate of $37.50 per household. The current water usage rate is $6.50 per thousand gallons used and will remain at $6.50 in 2022. The average bi-monthly water usage per household in Roaming Shores is 5,000 gallons. An average household water bi-monthly bill will go from $62.50 to $70 ($37.50 + ($6.50x5)) = $70. Similarly, the base rate for sewer is currently $42 and will increase $17.50 to a new base rate of $59.50. The current sewer usage rate of $11.00 per thousand gallons will remain the same in 2022. An average household using 5,000 gallons will go from a bi-monthly bill of $97 to $114.50 ($59.50 + ($11x5)) = $114.50. The bi-monthly base rate increases of $7.50 for water and $17.50 for sewer equal $25 which is $12.50/monthly.

What is the shortfall between the amount needed to cover our water/sewer expenses and the amount received via billing?
In 2019, a levy that partially covered water/sewer expenses expired. In 2020, the village used $100,000 from its reserve fund to cover the shortfall. A larger shortfall is expected for 2021 and will be covered from the village Sewer Reserve fund. The Village of Roaming Shores is required to maintain a specific amount of money in the Sewer Reserve fund to meet its negotiated financial obligations. The village cannot continue to cover the water/sewer shortfall by using the Sewer Reserve fund in 2022.

How much money will the rate increase generate for the village?
New water/sewer base rates will net approximately $150,000 annually. The additional revenue will eliminate a projected shortfall in 2022.

What alternatives were considered for funding the shortfall?
A levy, utility assessment and outsourcing were evaluated. Updating water/sewer technology would require an up-front investment and doing nothing would deplete the village's sewer reserve fund beyond financial requirements. A flat rate increase per household was determined to have the least expensive impact for residents. Ongoing analysis and alternatives will continue to be discussed by village staff and elected officials during 2022.

What is being done to contain rising water/sewer costs?
The Village of Roaming Shores is implementing more robust and efficient lift station pumps when breaks happen. Additionally, leaking fire hydrants are being repaired and the number of inspections is increasing to find leaks faster. The village is also working with the Ohio Rural Water Association and other groups that provide free expert consulting to make our water/sewer systems more cost-effective.

Who endorsed the rate increase?
Both the Roaming Shores Utility Committee and the Clerk-Treasurer have studied alternatives and recommended the rate increase to cover costs of providing clean and safe water/sewer services. After reviewing the data and discussing alternatives, a base rate increase was unanimously approved by the Roaming Shores Village Council at their November 16, 2021 meeting.

How do Roaming Shores water/ sewer rates compare to other local communities?
Rock Creek customers pay a higher amount for water/sewer services. A Rock Creek customer using 5,000 gallons of water over a two-month period pays $249 for water/sewer. By contrast, the average 5,000 gallon user in Roaming Shores pays $184.50 which is $64.50 less than Rock Creek residents. The Roaming Shores Utility Committee will continue to benchmark water/sewer costs with other local villages as it strives to lower Roaming Shores costs.

What if I can't pay my water/sewer bill?
If you have a financial hardship and cannot pay your water/sewer bill, contact the Roaming Shores Village Office. The Veterans Service Commission, Catholic Charities and Salvation Army have programs that may be able to assist.